

AL-PALIMBANI'S THOUGHT IN HIS SUFISTIC WORK

(Study on Manuscript in Saint Petersburg-Russia titled:
«*Tuhfat al-Raghibin fi bayan haqiqat al-iman*» or «A Gift for those,
who Seeks The Real Faith»)

To discuss the problem of religious networks between the Middle East and Southeast Asia, especially during the 18th century, we should not ignore the important roles of Syeikh 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani (1704–1792?)¹. Until now he has been considered as one of the greatest Sufi-writer² belongs to the *silsilah sulub* and *ratib* in the sufism order of Naqsyabandiyah founded by the grandson Guru Haji 'AH Tua or 'Abd al-Shamad Haji 'Ali (1872–1964) in Sumatra. Furthermore, as a pupil of Muhammad 'Abd al-Karim al-Samman al-Madani (d. 1775), 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani has been well known as the greatest syeikh of Sammaniyah order in South Sumatra province. The Sammaniyah order has much contributed to the defence of Palembang Sultanate from attacks of Dutch colonialism (1818–1819). Al-Palimbani's work on Jihad (the holy war) written in 1772 in Arabic was considered as the first work in this genre in Malay and has widely inspired the Aceh war in Sumatra against the Dutch in the late 19th — early 20th centuries. At least it was reflected in *Syair Perang Menteng* («*A Poem of War Against Muntinghe*») and remarked in the white «*Baju-Bakan*» (the white clothes for holy war) of Palembang collected in Saint Petersburg³.

¹ There are some hypotheses discussed about the death of 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani. Al-Baythar stated that al-Palimbani dead in 1785 (1200 H), while in Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah it informed in 1828 (1244 H). M.Ch. Quzwain and Azyumardi Azra rejected it, since it is difficult to accept that in 128 age old al-Palimbani went to the war against Siam in Sultanat Kedah. Both of them concluded that the dead of al-Palimbani was not so long after finishing his last work in 1789. Considering information of al-Ahdal in his Al-Nafs al-yamcmi wa al-ruh al-raihani that in 1792 al-Palimbani visited the Zabid city and taught several local students, including al-Ahdal himself, we prefer to say that al-Palimbani might be dead after 1792.

² See Wan Jamaluddin (in Russian) «Abd as-Samad al-Palimbani — Veliki Sufi Nusantari» // Vostok–Rassiya–Sankt Peterburg. Sbornik Statei. Izdatelstvo SPBGU, 2003. ('Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani — One of the Most Famous Sufi in Nusanlara. The Journal of «The East-Russia-Saint Petersburg». The Saint Petersburg State University-Press, 2003). P. 8–15.

³ It is also interesting knowing that Baju-Bakan collected in Academy of Russian Archives, registered 776.1.151 (1876), by Russian academic Boris Andreivic Dorn, is still unstudied until we visited it and observed in October 18th 2001 with

Syeikh ‘Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani wrote at least seven his own original works in theology, sufism and philosophy. Based on the short description above, we understand well that al-Palimbani played an important role in Islamic development and reformation in Southeast Asia region. Ironically, until now his third work, the manuscript of *Tuhfat al-raghibin* (written in 1774) is unstudied enough. Neither P. Voorhoeve [Voorhoeve 1960: 92], G.W.J. Drewes [Drewes 1976: 274–275], Vladimir I. Braginsky [Braginsky 1983], M. Chatib Quzwain [Quzwain 1985], Azyumardi Azra [Azra 1995] nor Martin van Bruinessen [Bruinessen 1997] concern to the fact that the manuscript is important to research. Most of them focused their study based on the most popular master pieces of al-Palimbani, *Hidayat al-salikin* (finished at Mecca, 5 Muharram 1192) and *Sair al-salikin* (finished at Tha’if in 1203).

According to P. Voorhoeve and Vladimir I. Braginsky the manuscript titled *Tuhfat al-raghibin fi bayan haqiqat al-iman al-mu ‘minin wa ma yufsiduh fi riddat al-murtaddin* is the third main works of Syeikh ‘Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani. Recently there are three manuscripts of *Tuhfat al-raghibin*: one is stored in The National Library in Jakarta [*Katalogus Koleksi Naskah Melayu Museum Pusat Jakarta... 1972*], another is under the collection of The Branch Institute for Oriental Studies in Saint Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences (in Soviet era named as Institute of Oriental Studies) [Braginsky, Boldireva 1977: 131–174], and its copy (microfilm) stored in the Library of Leidens University.

This paper aimed to represent the Saint Petersburg verse (registered in the collections of van Doorninck, 1876 No. 4024) due to its quality and accuracy. It does not mean that the Jakarta verse (register in the collection of Von de Wall No. 37) is not significant, but at least it could be considered as a comparasion and an addition verse to the Saint Petersburg version. Unfortunately, the Jakarta’s edition is not in a proper condition. The first pages of this verse are losted and arranged disorderly, while the Saint Petersburg-one is very well stored and written in better script.

Prof. Dr. Aleksander Konstantinovich Ogloblin. See Wan Jamaluddin (in Russian). Baju-Bakan v Sankt-Peterburge i bratsvo sammaniyya v Indonezii. Doklad na Maklayevskih cteniyah Instituta antropologiy i etnografiy imeni Petra Velikogo Rossiiski Akademiy Nauk (RAN), v Noyabre 2002 goda. (Baju-Bakan in Saint Petersburg and Sammaniyyah order in Indonesia. A paper on the Maclay Readings held at the Museum for Anthropology and Ethnography Russian Academy of Science. Saint Petersburg, November 2002). I owe my thanks to the Chief of Australian and Oceanic Department of the Institute, Dr. Yelena Vladimirovna Revunenkovna, who showed me those materials and invited me to the seminar.

Like his first work, *Zuhrat al-muridfi bayan kalimat al-tauhid* (written in 1764 and translated into Malay language), al-Palimbani wrote his third work in Malay language too. This fact shows that the work was intended for Muslims in Indonesia and Malay archipelago as well as al-Palimbani stated that he wrote the manuscript to answer the request from «V/re most honorable man» in Malay archipelago [Al-Palimbani...: 1]. G.W.J. Drewes hypothesized that should be Sultan Najm al-Din (ruled 1758–1776) or his son, Sultan Baha' al-Din (ruled 1776–1803), from Sultanate Palembang «Dar al-Salam» in South of Sumatra [Drewes 1976: 274].

It is quite interesting to study the manuscript of *Tuhfat al-raghibin*, in order to discover that al-Palimbani had an intellectual tendency to compromise and synthesize the various schools or mazhabs in Islam from his earlier ages in Hijaz (Saudi Arabia). During the 16–18th centuries, Islam in South East Asia was characterized by a long period of harmonization between syari'at and sufism, and the works of al-Palimbani are commonly acknowledged by the modern scholars as the culmination of this period.

The manuscript of *Tuhfat al-raghibin* is presented in the following structure: begins with statements in Arabic, then its explanation in Malay (or Jawi script). It discussed some questions of Islam such as theology (*kalam* and *ushul al-din*), sufism (*tasawwuf*), and as far as Islamic law and its traditions (*fiqh*). *Tuhfat al-raghibin* consists of four parts; preface, the first chapter about «The True Faith», the second about «Those which could destroy the Faith», the third talked about «The Principle of apostasy (*riiddat*)», and the fourth was «An Epilog about Repentance (*taubat*)».

The *Tuhfat al-raghibin* manuscript consisted on 102 pages and had never printed yet. In this work al-Palimbani was coloured not only by the Arab-Persian, Central-Asian, but also by African Islamic traditions. If the Arab-Persian traditions of al-Palimbani were represented by some works of both al-Ghazali and Ibn 'Arabi, his Central-Asian traditions were reflected at least by Abu Yusr Muhammad al-Bazdawi's opinions. And Zakaria al-Anshari and 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sya'rani represented the African (Egyptian) traditions.

For example, in the preface part of the text of *Tuhfat al-raghibin* 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani mentioned that he answered several religious problems which were offered to him by using the various points of view of the most authoritative authors in Islamic disciplines. His elaboration of *Iman* is similar to the definition made by Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari in his book: *Kitab al-luma'fi al-radd ahl al-ziyagh wa al-bida* [al-Asy'ari 1955: 123] and of Abu Manshur al-Maturidi in his work *Kitab al-tauhid* [al-Maturidi 1979: 372]. Both al-Asy'ari and al-Maturidi said that faith (*iman*) is a conviction by heart (*tashdiq al-qalb*) and not a verbal expression (*ikrar bi al-lisan*). Even though al-Palimbani

did not mention his references, as far as he described some options that can destroy our faith (*iman*), we surely could say that dominantly al-Palimbani referred to Syekh Abu al-Yusr Muhammad al-Bazdawi's opinions in his own work *Kitab ushul al-din*. Like al-Bazdawi, al-Palimbani wrote 72 sinner sects (*fasiq*) derived from 6 basic schools in Islam: Rafidliyah, Kharijiyah, Jabbariyah, Qadariyah, Jahmiyah and Murji'ah [al-Palimbani: 11–14; al-Bazdawi 1963: 241–254]. We can also find the similar description in other works such as al-Syahrastani's [al-Syahrastani 1984] or Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari's⁴, but the similarities of al-Palimbani's description to the al-Bazdawi's are more believable. Shortly, it could be said that *Tuhfat al-raghibin* contains a short Malay version of al-Bazdawi's descriptions [Wan Jamaluddin (in Russian) 2003: 16–29]. Furthermore, Abu al-Yusr Muhammad al-Bazdawi was well known as an opponent of Hanafism in fiqh tradition and in the same time Maturidism in theology. Abu al-Yusr Al-Bazdawi, apparently, was born around the year 421H and received his earliest education in Maturidism disciplines from his father, Abu al-Hasan Muhammad al-Bazdawi. Al-Bazdawi's *Kitab ushul al-din*, as it was described by Hanz P. Louis, could be classified in: Firstly, a short review of all literatures of the heretics on dogma and theology in Islam. Secondly, Hanafi-Sunni orthodoxy defense against the dissenting opinions and teachings of the heretical sects. Finally, a study on the heterodox factions in Islam, their subdivisions and their most important heads [al-Bazdawi 1963: 5–6].

The same case is also reflected in al-Palimbani's explanation about sufi-atheism categories: Hubbiyyah, Samrakhiyah, Khaliyah, Waqifiyyah, Mutakasiliyyah, Hululiyah, Mujassimah, Awliyaiyyah, Ibahiyah, Hururiyyah, Mutajahiliyyah, Ilhamiyyah and Wujudiyah⁵. Even though he mentioned several names of famous and credible authors, such as Abu Najib al-Suhrawardi, Najm al-Din 'Umar al-Nafi, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, once we could see that his description was similar to al-Bazdawi's opinions on the same topic. A little difference is that al-Palimbani named these cat-

⁴ We can explore the same information about several sects of Islamic theology and philosophy from others references such as Maqalat al-Islamiyyin of Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari (Vol. I ed. Const. 1929), Al-Farq bain al-firaq of al-Baghdadi (d. 429 H), Bughyat'l Multamis of al-Dabbi (d. 599 H), Wafayat al-a'yan of Ibn Khalikan (d. 681 H), Kasyf al-mahjub of Abu al-Hasan al-Hujwiri (d. 467 H), Tarikh al-Umam of Sa'id ibn Sa'id al-Andalusi (ed. Masyriq, 1911), etc.

⁵ More detail about those sects see Wan Jamaluddin (in Russian) Znaceniye tvorcestva al-Palimbani v razvitiy sufiiskoi traditsiy v indoneziiskom regione Nusantari v 18 veke. (kandidatskaya dissertatsia). SPBGU, 2003. (The significancies of al-Palimbani's works in sufistic traditions in Indonesia and Nusantara in 18th century. Ph.D. Dissertation, Saint Petersburg State University, 2003).

egories by sufi-atheism but al-Bazdawi remarked them by the school of *sufi-murtad* (*mazahib riddiyyah*). Like al-Bazdawi, al-Palimbani wrote: «There are some sects called them self as sufis. But, they were wrong, because they were actually similar to unbelievers (*kuffar*). Some authoritative imams and ‘ulamas had described them...» [al-Palimbani: 13; al-Bazdawi 1963: 253].

About the Hubbayah sect, al-Palimbani wrote: «They believe that when someone achieved the state of love and deeply falling in love to his God, then he had not love anyone else, because the law of syariat and all of the religious duties was specially changed for him. And all of the banned in syariat became allowed for him. And about the Awliyaiyyah sect, he explained that they believe, if someone achieved the state of closeness to God, he was out of control of religious law. Further, they said that “God’s beloved” was closer to God than the prophet to God. According to the Samrakhiiyyah sect, it is believed that performing favorable deeds, someone can adore his God and all of forbidden in syariat became allowed for him. They called themselves samrakhiiyyah because they followed and practiced the doctrines of ‘Abdallah Samrakhit. While the Ibahiyyah sect believed and practiced how to prevent the sinful by practicing the well-known regulations and banning, the Haliyyah sect said that they were prescribe to dance and applaud during the singing till they lose their own consciousness».

Furthermore, using the description of Abu al-Najib al-Suhrawardi in ‘*Awarif al-ma’arif* [al-Palimbani: 15], al-Palimbani wrote that almost of the Hululiyyah followers believed that they united to God and God is exists in them selves. So, a part of them said that they have to see to a woman as such as God see to her (or by vision of God). Return to al-Bazdawi’s redaction, al-Palimbani claimed that the Hururiyyah sect is similar to the Hululiyyah sect. Both believed that, when they were in trance a little virgin comes to them, and they clasped her to «wash» their deficiency and their sins [al-Palimbani: 15; al-Bazdawi 1963: 254]. About the Waqi’iyyah sect, al-Palimbani wrote that they rejected ma’rifat Allah because the law of the God is impossible to be understood by human being. According to the Mutajahiliyyah sect, they had to cook different foods, to dress women clothes, and to do another daily women’s jobs. The Mutakasiliyyah sect prefer to go around from a door to door to seek a food or to ask a part of the religious tax (*zakat*) for themselves. They were very lazy and often rejected to do any work. And al-Palimbani added that the Ilhamiyyah sect’s belief is similar to the unbelievers (*kuffar*); they prefer read and study philosophical poetry than al-Qur’an.

Before going to the next sect, al-Palimbani cited al-Ghazali’s opinion, which criticized the teachings and practical traditions of several sects above

and concluded that to kill them is better than making a war against one hundred infidel (*kuffar*)⁶.

Furthermore, about the Wujudiyyah sect, al-Palimbani wrote: «they believe and commit «La wujud ilia Allah? (No existence beside Allah), it means «I united with Allah». They also believe that the law of God is not perceivable, but its inner meanings exists in all of existences, because they are the mirrors of God». Discussing the Mujassimah sect, al-Palimbani cited an opponent of al-Ghazali, the Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's point of view in his own work *Kitab jauharah al-nafs*⁷. Al-Palimbani begun with al-Bazdawi's statement about their belief, in which mentions that Allah is similar to human being, such as He has a blood, face, hand etc. Further al-Palimbani cited Fakhr al-Din al-Razi opinions and concluded that the Mujassimah sect is also called as Musyabbihah. They were exactly wrong, because they believed that Allah is comparable with the human body and they admired their bodies [al-Palimbani: 16].

The actuality of *Tuhfat al-raghibin* clearly reflected in al-Palimbani's description on the local traditions of «*Negeri Bawah Angiri*» (the ancient name of Malay archipelago region), such as an offering of sacrificial rituals (called *menyanggar* and *buang fasilah*) categorized strictly forbidden in Islam. In this case, al-Palimbani did not base his argumentation only on the most popular and authoritative ulama's, such Ibrahim al-Laqqani (in '*Umdat al-murid syarh jauharah al-tauhid*')⁸, al-Qurthubi (in *Kitab Tadzkirah*)⁹, and al-Ghazali (in *Kitab minhaj al-'abidin*)¹⁰ but also on the most debatable and

⁶ Unfortunately in this case al-Palimbani did not mention his reference to al-Ghazali's works.

⁷ Al-Palimbani wrote that he cited it from *Kitab jauharah al-nafs* of al-Razi. Since we could not find this title in several works of al-Razi, it does probably mean *Risalah jauharah al-fard*. See Wan Jamaluddin. (in Indonesian) *Konsepsi Sifat-sifat Allah menurut Imam Fakh al-Din al-Razi* (The Divine Names of Allah in Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's thought; a theological studies on Mafatih al-Ghaib of al-Razi). Thesis of Magister program. IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, 1999.

⁸ His fullname is Nashir al-Din 'Abd al-Salam ibn Ibrahim al-Laqqani al-Maliki (d. 1078/1668). Al-Palimbani cited his opinion from al-Laqqani's work titled '*Umdat al-murid syarh jauharah al-tauhid*'. See C. Brockelmann. *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur & Supplemensbande* (GDAL-S). II. P. 419, 436. In the National Library of Jakarta we also found a same manuscript titled *Majmu' kitab 'umdat al-murid li jauharah al-tauhid*, that belongs to Sultan Mahmud Badr al-Din ibn Muhammad Baha' al-Din ibn Ahmad Najm al-Din from Sultanate Palembang «Dar al-Salam».

⁹ Unfortunately we could not find this work yet.

¹⁰ *Kitab minhaj al-'abidin* is one of most popular work of al-Ghazali that widely studied in Indonesian sphere.

controversial author, such as Ibn ‘Arabi (in *Al-Futuhat al-makkiyyah*)¹¹ and his opponent ‘Abd al-Wahhab asy-Sya’rani (in *Kasyf al-hijab wa al-rann ‘an wajh as ‘ilah al-jann*)¹².

Al-Palimbani strongly asked the ruler of sultanate Palembang «Dar al-Salam» to leave the old traditions contradicting syariat and to change or to fulfill it with the Islamic one. He also gave wide explanations about the sorts of sins and how to get rid of them. To achieve these aims, al-Palimbani referred to the opinions of Syeikh Zakaria al-Anshari written in the work entitled *Raudlat al-thalib*, Ibn al-Muqri’s book *Asna al-mathalib*, and *Kitab zawajir ‘an iktiraf al-kaba’ir* of Ibn Hajar al-Haytami¹³.

Beside al-Bazdawi, it’s interesting to analyze the intellectual character of Ibn Hajar al-Haytami and of al-Ramli. In Islamic law traditions both of them are known as famous scholars and prolific writers of the Shafi’i school. In *Tuhfat al-raghibin* al-Palimbani at times cited the main work of Ibn Hajar titled *Tuhfat al-muhtaj li syarh al-minhaj* («*The Commentary on Minhaj al-thalibin of Imam al-Nawawi*»), while at the same moment al-Palimbani referred his explanations to the main work of al-Ramli, *Kitab al-nihaya*. These works became the two authoritative textbooks of Syafi’i school, and had been printed often. Among Indonesian moslems these books are popular and until now are widely studied in several local Islamic schools (called *pesantren* or *madrrasah*). And *Kitab zawajir* of Ibn Hajar mentioned above is recognized as one of the most important works of the practical morality of Islam. Al-Palimbani at least twice cited the opinion of Ibn Hajar and once of al-Ramli in his *Tuhfat al-raghibin*, when he discussed the problem of apostasy (*riddat*) in Sultanate Palembang «Dar al-Salam» [Al-Palimbani: 22–23].

Conclusion

Whole text of *Tuhfat al-raghibin* showed us how al-Palimbani had started to reform the Islamic teachings and its traditions practiced in Malay archipelago (especially in the Sultanate Palembang’s territory) by using some

¹¹ In his *Tuhfat al-raghibin* al-Palimbani just mention *Al-Futuhat* (without *al-makkiyyah*). It most probably means *Al-Futuhat al-makkiyyah* that up to now it is considered as one of the greatest work of Ibn ‘Arabi. The translation and commentary of this book published in Russian language by Prof. Aleksander D. Knysh, in 1995 and titled «*Mekkanskie otkroveniya*».

¹² C. Brockelmann informed that the work titled *Kasyf al-hijab wa al-asrar ‘an wajh mas ‘alah al-jann*. See GAL II. P. 335–338; Supplemensbande II. P. 464–467.

¹³ Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn ‘AH Ibn Hajar al-Makki al-Haitami was a pupil of Zakaria al-Anshari. He is one of the most famous thinkers and writers in Syafi’ism school. His work *Kitab zawajir ‘an iktiraf al-kaba’ir* can be found in The Library of Institut for Qur’anic Sciences in Jakarta as well.

different theological schools of kalam, fiqh and sufism in Islam. Finally, we can take a short conclusion that al-Palimbani was really an encyclopedic sufi of Nusantara, who more successfully harmonized several religious teachings and traditions in Islam and as far as possible transformed it to Southeast Asia.

The most famous names Zakaria al-Anshari and his decessor, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, gave us an accurate information to conclude that in *fiqh* al-Palimbani is syafi'ism, and some times it combined the opinions of malikism of Ibrahim al-Laqqani and of hanafism of al-Bazdawi. Though in theology he was strongly dominated by asy'arism and maturidism schools, but in sufism he had a tendency to combine the Persian-Arabic traditions, represented by al-Ghazali and Ibn 'Arabi, and Egyptian traditions, represented by both of 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sya'rani and Zakaria al-Anshari.

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